



**Homeland
Security**

U.S. COAST GUARD



Marine Safety Office Saint Louis



CO's Corner

We are off and running down the 2005 road with so much ahead of us - including Mardi Gras! As the

East Coast Titans battle it out this weekend during football's season finale, we're well on our way to our new season of inspections, law enforcement, training, and the multitude of tasks we set for our talented crew. New unit members have already started their tours with us and some others have earned well-deserved promotions. Outside of our "walls" Secretary Ridge begins to implement the new National Response Plan as Headquarters fervently discusses the final stages of implementing Sectors and Congress discusses the President's most recent proposal to change military policy by increasing death benefits. Improving our game plan is part of making any organization effective. As we "scout" for talent & make our play books, a few have taken your shot at how to improve the CG in this newsletter by answering my question..."how would *you* change or influence the Coast Guard?" You never know how far an idea will go until you try it - maybe we'll see some of these ideas in our future!

Be Safe & Keep Sharp! CO



Command Chief's Corner

To all MSO St. Louis personnel, this is the start of a New Year. I know 2004 was a busy year for all of us and I don't

see things slowing down in 2005, keep up the good work. This year I would like to see more promotions come across the CO's desk, so active duty members you need to have your end of course tests and military practical factors for your Rating & MRN completed now to compete in the May 05 service wide exam. Remember you can use the new Enlisted Professional Military Education or the old practical factors for this SWE. .

If I were Commandant for the year....

By Matt Cossitt

If I were Commandant for a year I think that I would put more money into recruiting. If you take a look at the other branches, they are able to get out to job fairs, college fairs, and site visits to high schools. They are also able to put on commercials during prime time T.V. and during major sporting events. The more we could put toward this area, I feel that at least we would be reaching

the greater amount of the population and remove the stigma of being the "unknown" branch. I also believe that by doing this, we would have a fighting chance with pulling more young people to fill our present shortfalls. That is what I would do to make a positive change within the Coast Guard.

If I were Commandant for the year....

By Chris Pisares

I would look into reducing the amount of time it takes for a Chief Warrant Officer to be promoted from W-2 to W-4. Currently, a W-2 & W-3 must spend 4 years in grade before being eligible for promotion. Thus, assuming promotion at the earliest time possible, 10 years as a Chief Warrant Officer is required to retire as a W-4 (four years in each pay grade and two years as a W-4).

By the time most enlisted personnel compete for Chief Warrant Officer; they have 13-17 years in the Coast Guard. These are career Coasties that have demonstrated their utmost dedication and technical expertise to their ship and shipmates (aka country and service). Completing the 10-year commitment to retire as a W-4 is asking for a 23-27 year Coast Guard career. I know a number of Chief Warrant Officers who put in this time and I am humbled by their dedication. This dedication is a great example for all those to follow. However, I wonder if a 25-30 year career is necessary to demonstrate this. Even reducing the time in each grade by one year will allow a Chief Warrant Officer to make W-4 in 6 years and retiring in 8 years. Considering the amount of time they have even before making Chief Warrant Officer and the level of responsibilities assigned, this could be comparable to other promotion periods over a 6-year span.

If I were Commandant for the year....

By Terry McDermid

I would change the basic pay raises from a percentage across the board to a flat pay raise across the board. This could be done by taking the percentage that Congress passes for the raise, then calculate what the total \$ amount would be and take that number and divide it equally across the pay board. Through the last five years alone basic pay has been building a bigger gap between

personnel and I feel it has hit it's limits. Now is the time to give pay raises evenly across the board. Listed below is the differential in monthly pay raise increases for different pay grades/years in service from January 1, 2000 to January 1, 2005.

Rank	Years in Service	5-Year Increase
O-6	18 yrs	\$1421
O-3	6 yrs	\$ 842
O-2	3 yrs	\$ 631
W-4	26 yrs	\$ 1209
E-7	18 yrs	\$ 844
E-6	6 yrs	\$ 506
E-4	3 yrs	\$ 377

Please understand this is just the raise differential per month for the last five years. I would also change the lower Junior Officer Pay to ensure they made less than E-7 and above, match it along with E-6 pay. Why should an O-2 over three years make more than the E-7 at twenty years who is the one mentoring/molding this individual? The E-7 has proved his worth and knowledge alone that he holds and shares with all ranks is worth more than what he earns.

If I were Commandant for the year....

By Andy Starnes

I would start a very heavy recruiting plan and would increase the work force by at least 10%. The CG is a small service and has always taken pride with doing more with less, but when more turns into too much you are left with less. The men and women doing these almost impossible tasks will always do what has to be done because we are very proud, but be careful; the wick is burning at both ends! I would bring in an outside consulting firm to audit our reporting procedures to ensure that we are completing all of our reports, files and paper work in the most efficient manner. I believe that we are using valuable man-hours on useless, redundant reports. Once we have the results, actually make the changes we need to make it easier and more efficient for ALL COASTIES. I would include the smaller units with the same equipment that other CG units have. With the same resources all over the CG, any qualified member could easily be available where they are needed. Telling members to go out and do the job and do it well is not fair if they are not provided with the proper tools. I would get rid of the phrase "Do more with less." I would make a conscious effort to appreciate the hard working men and women out there doing the jobs. Visit the people out in the field and let them know that I am here for them and give them the appropriate praise for the job that they are doing for their country and me personally. I have met great people all over the country and look forward to meeting many more, I am proud to serve my country and my fellow Coasties.

If I were Commandant for the year....

By William Barton

In the future all computers and computer systems would be leased using the same best practices as major corporations. This would help eliminate the task of discarding outmoded equipment as technology changes. The computer procurement process would include hiring contractors. The contractors would be experienced in software and hardware development. The bid process will be that the CG will explain its needs and minimum requirements. The contractors would then demonstrate how they would provide the required computer equipment. Demonstrating actual operating computer equipment will do this. A group of civilian, reserve and active duty will actively use the computers as they would for their particular field of expertise. Once a bid is approved the contractor will provide software and hardware support. When computer components fail they will be readily replaced within 24 hours. User training classes and manuals will be approved and provided to the field at the time of the new equipment change out.

RESERVES!

Port Arthur is asking our Reserves to help them with military out loads as crew-served weapons become a staple of their operations. If you are interested in Title 10, please contact CDR Gillespie ASAP.

CONGRATS:

★ **LTjg Kyle Retzlaff & LTjg**

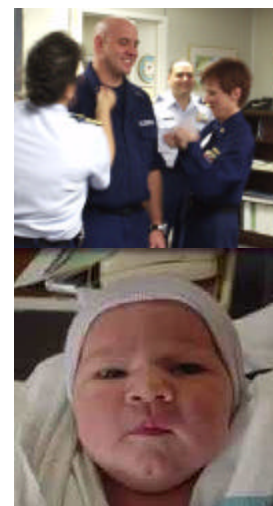
Erik Johnson on your

promotion to LTjg!

★ **BMC Ferguson** for entering the hallowed company of the Chief's Mess!

★ **BMC Paschia** for throwing bowling balls down the alley with such precision that you & our MSO team won trophies!!!!

★ **The Haynie Family** who welcomed their newest addition Sara Marie!



CONCERNS:

The Coddling Family as Jason Coddling recovers from a very scary and serious infection.

The Jackson Family as Caroline recovers from aggressive surgery.

The Snowden Family as they remember their long-time family friend & father figure who passed away 2/1/05.